

**Response by the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in response to the
Welsh Government Consultation: A reformed post-compulsory education and training system**

I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the Welsh Government’s Consultation ‘A reformed post-compulsory education and training system’.

As Public Services Ombudsman for Wales (PSOW), I investigate complaints made by members of the public who believe they have suffered hardship or injustice through maladministration or service failure on the part of a body in my jurisdiction, which essentially are all those organisations responsible for delivering public services devolved to Wales, these include:

- local government (both county and community councils);
- the National Health Service (including GPs and dentists);
- registered social landlords (housing associations); and
- the Welsh Government, together with its sponsored bodies.

I am also able to consider complaints about privately arranged or funded social care and palliative care services.

In addition I have jurisdiction to look into certain bodies within the education sector such as admission or exclusion panels, as well as Estyn and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales (HEFCW).

My response to this consultation is restricted to the proposal for the establishment of the Tertiary Education and Research Commission for Wales, and the complaints aspects.

I welcome the establishment of a single funding body for the Higher Education sector. However, the HEFCW is within my jurisdiction, therefore if a new body is created to take on all of HEFCW’s functions, consideration would need to be given to whether I would still have powers to consider complaints about all or some of its functions.

The complaints system for learners in the PCET sector is currently unfair as they have no way of progressing a complaint beyond the body which they are complaining about. I agree that there needs to be a process put in place to allow complaints to be considered independently. I believe this should fall either within the remit of my office, or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.